

4. NOTES ON BARBE'S LEAF MONKEY *PRESBYTIS BARBI* BLYTH

Barbe's Leaf Monkey locally known as *Dudhi Mukho Bandor* or *Chasma Chok*, is found in all three districts of Tripura, but the species has not been included among the 18 non-human primate species recorded in different parts of the country (Mohnot 1980). Other primate species besides Barbe's leaf monkey occurring in Tripura are common tree shrew (*Tupaia glis*), Slow loris (*Nycticebus coucang*), Assamese Macaque (*Macaca assamensis*), Rhesus Macaque (*Macaca mulatta*), Pigtailed macaque (*Macaca nemestrina*), Capped langur (*Presbytis pileatus*) and Hoolock Gibbon (*Hylobates hoolock*). Practically no work has been done on the ecology of any of the species known from Tripura. Barbe's leaf monkey is probably found only in Tripura in India.

The head and body are dusky grey with pale buff sheen on the back and black erect brow. A well defined crest present. The whiskers are fairly long and partially cover the ears. The area around eyes and upper and lower lips, chalk white. Ventral fur silvery white. Fore and hind limbs are of the same colour as the body except the black hand and feet. The tail slightly paler than the body with a tuft of black-brown hairs at the tip. The area below pubic callosities light grey in male but yellowish in female. The young ones are pale in colour.

Barbe's Leaf Monkey is found in Tripura where rainfall is high and forests are tropical evergreen/tropical semi-evergreen and moist deciduous forests with Bamboo brakes. They

are completely arboreal and seldom found near human habitations.

The troops consists of a dominant male with 5/6 females, subadults and young ones, which are usually born during September-October. The average troop size is 10-12, and the largest troop seen was of 22, at Paratia under Udaipur Division.

They feed mostly on leaves, flowers and fruits and were never seen on the ground. The leaf monkey was seen feeding on the following trees. Young shoots being favoured.

Mangifera sylvatica, *Phyllanthus emblica*, *Terminalia bellerica*, *Hymenodictyon excelsum*, *Artocarpus chaplasha*, *Alstonia scholaris*, *Gmelina arborea*, *Dipterocarpus turbinatus*, *Dillenia pentagyna*, *Albizia stipulata*, *Terminalia chebula*, *Bursera serrata*, *Amoora rohittuka*, *Cedrela toona*, *Schleichera trijuga*, *Amoora wallichii*, *Bombax ceiba*, *Lagerstroemia flos-reginea*, *Anthocephalus cadamba*, *Bauhinia* spp., *Schima wallichii*, *Swietenia mahagoni*, *Erythrina suberosa*.

Though an exact census has not been conducted, it is estimated that the total population in Tripura will be around 400 and 60% of these are found in the south and west districts of Tripura.

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5. INCIDENTAL OBSERVATIONS OF THE SPOTTED LINSANG (*PRIONODON PARDICOLOR*)

The spotted linsang is recorded from primary and secondary forests in Nepal, Assam, northern Burma, and Indo-China at elevations of 150 m (above sea level) to 1850 m (Prater 1971). Little is known of the ecology or natural history of the linsang. Breeding is thought to occur in February and possibly again in August. An individual kept in captivity in Darjeeling refused to eat fish, eggs and fruit but lived on raw meat (Prater 1971). However, two banded linsang (*P. linsang*) in captivity in Malaysia readily ate white mice, birds, fresh fish and fresh eggs but rejected fruits such as banana and papaya (Liat 1973). Stomach contents of three wild-caught banded linsang included remains of spiny-furred rats, birds and a tree lizard, indicating that the linsang hunts on and above the forest floor (Liat 1973). Indeed, of 12 banded linsang collected in Malaysia, eight were shot while moving between three and eight metres above the forest floor; the remainder were trapped on the ground (Liat 1973).

Four observations of spotted linsang in the lowland forests and grasslands (150 m a.s.l.)

of Royal Chitawan National Park in southern Nepal (latitude 27°30'N; longitude 84°20'E) support this information. In one instance in late February (1975) an adult male and an adult female fell into a well and drowned. Such a close association suggests that mating activity was involved. The remaining observations indicate the animal is an opportunistic carnivore. On 17 January 1975 a linsang was driven out of dense vegetation surrounding a tiger (*Panthera tigris*) kill when domestic elephants moved through the area. The habitat was a mosaic of riverine forest and tall, dense grasses. This individual was probably an adult based on measurements given in Walker (1975: 1231). Another linsang, also judged to be an adult, was seen feeding on the carcass of a tiger kill at 1830 hr on 4 February 1975. The kill was located in an area of dense riverine forest. While the observation of 4 February was only 2 km east of that for 17 January it was unlikely that the same animal was involved because it would have had to cross a river about 150-200 m wide. The third observation occurred in mid-March (1979) in an